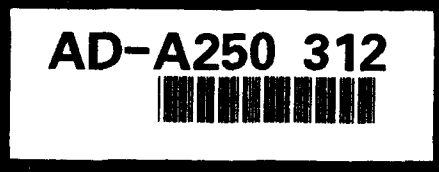

USAWC MILITARY STUDIES PROGRAM PAPER

US INTERVENTION INTO RUSSIA

AN INDIVIDUAL STUDY PROJECT

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ABSTRACT

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In August of 1918 US forces intervened in Russia in coordination with other allied forces. Although it is 75 years later there are many similarities today as the US attempts to engage a Russian government emerging from an upheaval in its history. In 1918 President Wilson wrestled with the decision to intervene for approximately six months. During that time he was besieged by Allies desperate to reestablish an eastern front in Russia and by US diplomats bent on intervention. He reluctantly gave in and agreed to intervene against the advice of his military advisers. The result was an ambiguous statement of US policy, followed by an inconsistent execution of that policy. This study project analyzes the background of the decision to intervene, the development of the subsequent policy document, and the execution of that policy. Lessons for future policy formulation and execution are also presented.

INTRODUCTION

The dissolution of the Soviet Union and the coincidental end of the Cold War conclude a period in history in which the United States(US) and the Soviet Union were locked in a fierce struggle. An interesting aspect of this confrontation took place in 1918 when American forces intervened in Russia at the request of the Allies fighting Germany in World War I. During this intervention Americans fought and died on Russian soil, most of them after the Armistice with Germany had been declared.

This little known action at the end of World War I is interesting because it involved confrontation with the Soviet Union on its own soil. It is also intriguing because of the parallels which exist between that time and now. Then, as now, an event of major proportions precipitated the fall of the Russian government. World War I devastated the Russian people. The Czar, on the verge of being overthrown, abdicated. He was replaced by the Kerensky government only to be overthrown by the Bolsheviks in November of 1917. In the last few years we have seen the similar unraveling of a hard line communist regime in the Soviet Union. Mikhail Gorbachev started an evolution with perestroika and glasnost. However, other Soviet leaders were dissatisfied with him and attempted a coup. It failed but eventually led to Gorbachev's downfall. Boris Yeltsin is now in power and continues to institute reforms. In the United States and much of the remainder of the world leaders are trying to determine how to deal with the new Russia.

As the US develops foreign policy towards the Confederation

of Independent States(CIS) it is important to analyze the decision that led to intervention in 1918. Perhaps this will prevent mistakes as both countries attempt to move forward in a very unsettled global environment, similar to the one that existed in 1918.

It is the purpose of this paper to analyze the decision President Wilson made in 1918. After analyzing the decision and trying to answer the questions of why the US intervened and was it necessary, the paper will examine the document which the president wrote stating US policy for the intervention. Furthermore, the President's policy will be analyzed to determine if it was consistent with the reasoning for his decision and whether or not it was properly executed. Finally some recommendations will be offered for future decision making.

THE EASTERN FRONT

World War I dominated global events in 1918. The War was not going well for the Allies, and the situation in Russia was a significant part of the problem. The Bolshevik revolution in November of 1917 led to the second change of government in Russia in one year. Russian attention was not on the war against Germany. This worried the Allies because the Russians were keeping 40 German divisions pinned down on the eastern front.[1] With the signing of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk in March of 1918 the Russians were completely out of the war and the Germans were free to concentrate on the western front. The Germans launched a

major offensive in that same month, and Allied pressure on the US to intervene in Russia greatly intensified.

The Allies proposed to intervene with troops at Archangel in North Russia and at Vladivostok in Siberia. President Wilson resisted this request for good reason. A quick look at a map reveals how far removed each of these ports are from Europe and the eastern front. Vladivostok is 6000 miles from Europe, and Archangel is 1600 miles from Moscow. It was impractical for troops to land at these two distant ports and expect to threaten the Germans.

Another important factor was the number of troops required to reconstitute a viable front. None of the Allies had troops to spare in the quantity required to oppose 40 divisions. General Pershing advised against diverting any of his troops to another front because it would dilute his forces in France.[2] The British, French and Americans were totally dedicated to the western front.

President Wilson also knew that the Allies were grasping at straws. General Tasker Bliss had reported from the Supreme War Council that an attitude of desperation existed.[3] He urged Washington to bear this in mind when considering intervention. Wilson recognized that starting a front from Vladivostok and Archangel was a desperate move. Due to the great distances involved and the number of forces which could be employed, such a front would have minimal military value in the war against Germany. Wilson was right to resist Allied arguments for a new front in the East.

THE JAPANESE

The Japanese were a factor in reestablishing the eastern front. In early 1918 the Allies encouraged Japan to intervene in Russia. President Wilson resisted arguments supporting Japanese intervention and was correct to do so. In addition to the reasons above against establishing a front in Siberia, Wilson was concerned about Japanese intentions.

The Russo-Japanese War was only a decade removed and the Japanese still had strong economic ties to the region. The Russians were opposed, in particular, to a unilateral intervention by the Japanese.[4] Wilson realized that the Japanese could do more harm than good for the Allied cause if their intervention was perceived as an occupation. Intervention might turn the Russians into the arms of the Germans, and President Wilson did not want that to happen.[5]

In retrospect the President's inclination to oppose Japanese intervention was proper. The Japanese did not leave Siberia until two years after the Americans, and only then after domestic opposition and diplomatic pressure from western nations forced them to withdraw.[6] The Japanese, initially, had no interest in helping with the eastern front, and it was only after the Bolsheviks began to cause trouble in Siberia and threaten Japanese trade that the Japanese government became interested in intervention.[7] Japan's primary interest was economic well being and trouble in Siberia threatened that interest. The war against Germany was not a priority for Japan.

WAR MATERIELS

Another reason presented to President Wilson in support of intervention was the necessity to protect American war materiel, which had been sent to Russia to aid in the fight against Germany. Military stores in Vladivostok were valued as high as one billion dollars.[8] Similar amounts had been transported to Archangel. There was concern that these supplies would be acquired and used by Germany.

President Wilson accepted these arguments, but should have rejected them. One of the reasons there were so many supplies in Vladivostok was the poor condition of the Trans-Siberian Railroad.[9] This made it difficult to move supplies in a timely manner. Even if the railroad had been fully operational the supplies in Vladivostok were too far from German troops to be worth moving. In Archangel the Bolsheviks were moving the supplies south for their own use. Ambassador Francis had urged intervention to protect these stores. This is the argument Wilson accepted, but by the time American troops arrived there was nothing left to secure.[10] It is doubtful that any US war supplies would have fallen into German hands had the intervention not occurred.

GERMAN POWS

Eighty thousand German prisoners of war (POWs) were in camps in Siberia in early 1918.[11] President Wilson had to weigh contradicting reports about the status of these POWs in making

his decision to intervene. Allied diplomats and the US Consul in Vladivostok reported that the POWs were escaping and arming themselves.[12] This threatened Russian autonomy in the region and US military supplies. Other reports from US sources in the region indicated just the opposite.[13]

Reports of armed and organized POWs worried Secretary of State Lansing and affected the President's decision. This is unfortunate because the facts indicate that a problem did not exist with the POWs. The problem was getting accurate information, and in this case advisers desirous of intervention were painting an inaccurate picture.[14] General William S. Graves, the commander of the US troops in Siberia, pointed out that two separate investigations in March of 1918 revealed that German POWs were not a problem:

> ...the Soviets did not release their German war prisoners from the prison camps, and the rumor that the Germans were forming a battle front in Siberia was propaganda designed to influence the United States in the question of military action.[15]

THE CZECH LEGION

After the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk a group of 60,000 Czechoslovakian soldiers began making its way across Russia toward Vladivostok.[16] The Czech Legion, as it was called, had fought with the Russians against the Germans and was now attempting to return to the western front and renew the fight. Instead of withdrawing peacefully, hostilities broke out and by May of 1918 the Czechs were fighting the Bolsheviks along the

length of the Trans-Siberian Railroad.[17]

President Wilson was strongly encouraged to help the Czech Legion. His diplomatic advisers in Russia, China, and Siberia were all calling for intervention; and the Allies continued their pleas for the same.[18] The President took the Czech situation seriously, and it consequently had a much larger effect on his decision to intervene than it deserved. Again, accurate information was hard to come by. The Czechs were portrayed as a valiant, outnumbered force, struggling in support of the Allied cause. In fact, they had the upper hand in Siberia; and everywhere they opposed the Bolsheviks, new anti-Bolshevik regimes had sprung up.[19] As a result the Czechs controlled the Trans-Siberian Railroad. The Czechs clearly had the ability to extract themselves from Russia. In fact, the force that eventually intervened could not effectively assist the Czechs because it was too small in comparison to the force it was supposed to save.

INTERVENTION

President Wilson resisted Allied requests to intervene in Russia for six long months in 1918. He also resisted the counsel of most of his advisers. In July he grudgingly gave in. In the end it appears that two things swayed his decision. First of all was the mounting pressure brought on by the successive reasons that came to light during that time. The eastern front, the threat of lone Japanese intervention, German POWs, war supplies,

and finally the Czech Legion demanded intervention depending on whom you believed. Many of these factors were inadequate as sole reasons, but they were presented collectively and with exaggerated enthusiasm to support intervention. General Robert L. Eichelberger, who participated in the intervention as a major on General Graves' staff, points out:

> I expect Mr. Wilson was not told too much and I believe that a lot of the stories that filtered through to Washington about conditions in Siberia were deliberately prepared to force the President's favorable decision about the Siberian expedition.[20]

This quote points out the complexity and ambiguity of decision making in the global environment in which Wilson found himself in 1918. As a strategic leader he was conducting business over long lines of communication with numerous players who had their own interests at heart--interests that caused reports to be less than factual. This situation hampered the President's ability to collect accurate and timely information, and resulted in a poor decision. This is a good example of the fog of war at the strategic level.

Considering the reasons mentioned above there is only one which possibly required intervention, and that is unilateral Japanese action. However, this too lacks credibility because the Japanese indicated as late as June that they would not act without US approval.[21] None of the reasons examined were individually strong enough to warrant intervention; in fact most of them were false. But as 1918 wore on the reasons accumulated and the lack of accurate information allowed the case for

intervention to gain more credence than it deserved.

The second and final element that induced Wilson to agree to intervention was his concern that he would be perceived as an uncooperative ally if he did not. He placed the winning of the war first, and this implied no quarrel with the Allies.[22] As a leader Wilson showed weakness at this point. Good relations with the Allies were important, but sending US troops into Russia at great distances from the actual fighting front was a needless risk. Against his better judgement he

> felt obliged to do it anyhow because the British and French were pressing it on his attention so hard and he had refused so many of their requests that they were beginning to feel he was not a good associate much less a good ally.[23]

THE AIDE-MEMOIRE

The President did something rare for an American Commander in Chief when he made his decision. He expressed the reasons for his decision and the objectives of US policy for intervention into Russia in the form of an aide-memoire(literally means aid to memory). (See Appendix 2.) This document became U.S. policy in Russia and is useful in the analysis of that intervention. In summary it stated the following:

1. The primary objective is to win the war against Germany.
2. The US desires to cooperate with its allies.
3. Intervention will injure rather than help Russia.
4. Military action is admissible to help the Czechs.

5. Efforts to help the Russians are permissible.

6. Troops can be employed to guard military stores.

7. The US will not limit the action or policy of its allies.

8. US forces will be withdrawn when and if necessary.

9. The US will not interfere with the internal affairs of Russia.

President Wilson does not appear to have resolved the confusion he felt concerning intervention when his policy is reviewed in this document. In regards to the third point the aide-memoire states:

> It is the clear and fixed judgement of the United States, arrived at after repeated and very searching reconsiderations of the whole situation in Russia, that military intervention there would add to the present sad confusion in Russia rather than cure it, injure her rather than help her, and that it would be of no advantage in the prosecution of our main design, to win the war against Germany. It cannot, therefore, take part in such intervention or sanction it in principle.[24]

In the same paragraph Wilson goes on to say:

> Military action is admissible in Russia, as the Government of the United States sees the circumstances, only to help the Czecho-Slovaks consolidate their forces and...the only legitimate object for which American or allied troops can be employed, it submits, is to guard military stores...[25]

These two statements taken together are ambiguous. On the one hand President Wilson says that intervention will not help the situation in Russia or help to win the War. Then he states that military action is permitted. First he says it is only allowed to help the Czechs, but goes on to say that military

action is permitted only to guard supplies. The first question of the military commander charged with executing this policy should have been, "What is my mission?" The language was odd, confusing, and woefully inadequate as a description of military purpose.[26] Yet, this aide-memoire served as the instructions used by General Graves the commander of American troops in Siberia.

As a guide for diplomats the aide-memoire was also unreliable. It placed upon them, as well as the military commanders, the job of determining what the correct action was in a given situation.[27] It states that action is admissible

> to steady any efforts at self government or self-defense in which the Russians themselves may be willing to accept assistance.[28]

But then it goes on to add, that there will be no interference in the internal affairs of Russia, or any impairment of her territorial integrity.[29] Taken in combination these statements are vague and leave too much room for interpretation.

EXECUTION OF POLICY, NORTH RUSSIA

The ambiguous statement of policy in the aide-memoire and the divergent interests of the people involved led to problems in the execution of the President's policy. In North Russia the problem revolved around the three people principally responsible for carrying out the policy of the aide-memoire. They were: Colonel George E. Stewart, commander of US forces; General F.C. Poole, a British general who commanded all Allied forces; and US Ambassador Francis.[30] Although the aide-memoire was sent to all

foreign and US ambassadors the British appeared to understand only that US troops would participate in the intervention, and they clearly ignored the rest of its contents.[31] It also appears that the British military and their commander in North Russia were never made aware of the limitations set forth in the aide-memoire.[32]

Allied intervention in North Russia began, under General Poole's direction, in direct contradiction with the President's policy of not interfering with internal Russian affairs. A Putsch was organized in Archangel, and it occurred on the day that General Poole arrived with Allied troops in August 1918.[33] The situation never improved. Upon landing, American troops were split up and sent three different ways under Allied commanders. The majority of the troops began attacking south, fighting the Bolsheviks as they went. Clearly against President Wilson's policy, this action was not protested by Colonel Stewart.

Colonel Stewart was not entirely to blame for the improper use of American troops. Like General Poole, there is no evidence to indicate that Colonel Stewart had ever seen the terms of the aide-memoire.[34] He, most likely, was not aware of the details of US policy. He was told to report to General Poole who was in charge of all Allied forces, and based on that he carried out his duties as outlined by General Poole.

Even if Colonel Stewart had been aware of the President's policy it is doubtful that he could have implemented it properly. Ambassador Francis, the ranking American in the area, was

supportive of General Poole and his plan to attack south against the Bolsheviks. The Ambassador had also established early on that Colonel Stewart was required to follow his orders as he was the official interpreter of US policy in Russia.[35] At the very least Colonel Stewart should have protested the dismemberment of his regiment as General Pershing had protested the breakup of US forces in France.

Ambassador Francis must shoulder the majority of the blame for the failure of US policy in North Russia. Instead of interpreting the policy put forth in the aide-memoire as cautious, he devised policy that was aggressive in its approach.[36] He detested Bolshevism and sought intervention as a belligerent enterprise. Hence, he was persuaded by the British and therefore believed that Allied forces could strike deep into Russia, link up with the Czechs, and possibly bring down the Bolsheviks at the same time.[37] In his mind, attacking south made it possible to recapture lost war supplies and assist the anti-Bolsheviks with self-government. This loose interpretation of Wilson's policy was possible due to the ambiguity of the aide-memoire.

When President Wilson learned the extent of operations in North Russia he threatened to withdraw US troops if General Poole did not change his attitude.[38] The British government took action in response to the President's threat, and Poole was replaced in October. But the damage was done. The Allies were in direct confrontation with the Bolsheviks and had overextended

themselves into Russian territory. General Poole's replacement put Allied forces on the defensive and countered Bolshevik attacks through the winter of 1918-1919. US troops were withdrawn in April.

EXECUTION OF POLICY, SIBERIA

General Graves, the commander of US troops in Siberia, was 6000 miles from Archangel and therefore unaffected by Ambassador Francis. In addition, he was given a copy of the aide-memoire as his instructions for operating in Siberia. He studied the aide-memoire carefully. His interpretation of the wording in the aide-memoire led him to pursue a policy of noninterference in Russian affairs. He staunchly adhered to this belief, and was supported throughout his time in Siberia by the President and the War Department.[39] It must be concluded, therefore, that non-interference was the intended policy of the US government.[40] Regardless of this support General Graves was routinely at odds with US allies, as well as the US diplomats in the region.

When he arrived in Siberia General Graves was confronted by the Japanese commander and told that the Japanese had overall command of Allied forces in Siberia.[41] Unlike his counterpart in North Russia, General Graves let it be known that only he would command American forces, and that he would only take orders from the American government. This was a critical but important stand as it allowed him to carry out US policy as he understood it.

Further complicating the situation in Siberia was the fact

that the Czech Legion was no longer moving toward Vladivostok for evacuation to the Western Front. Instead it was now fighting the Bolsheviks and in control of the Trans-Siberian Railroad. The conditions of the aide-memoire had changed. This created a predicament for Graves. The Allies, particularly the French, wanted US troops to assist the Czechs. Graves refused, and his position was justified since the aide-memoire said he could assist the Czechs coming together, in effect, for evacuation. There was no mention of supporting them in fighting Bolsheviks or assisting the White Russians, either of which would have been interference in Russian affairs. This neutral stance by General Graves irritated the Allies and even resulted in accusations that he was a Bolshevik sympathizer.[42]

The Czech problem is also illustrative of the divergent views on Siberian policy held by the State Department and the War Department. The American Ambassador to Japan was sent to Siberia to examine the situation with the Czech Legion. In his report he recommended that US forces move west and support the Czechs in their fight against the Bolsheviks.[43] The President disagreed and General Graves maintained his course on US policy, which was to stay neutral.

In 1919 the State Department was on the verge of recommending recognition and support of Admiral Alexander Kolchak, the leader of an anti-Bolshevik faction.[44] In this case events overtook the need for a decision, because Kolchak was defeated and executed by the Bolsheviks. But it shows that US

policy was still confused in Siberia at that date, and US representatives were at odds as to its intended direction. This conflict was a constant irritant for General Graves, and more importantly it sent the wrong message to all the nations and Russian factions in Siberia. As General Graves points out:

> ...the representatives of the War Department and the State Department were carrying out entirely different policies at the same time in the same place. There can be no difference of opinion as to the accuracy of this statement, and the results were bitter criticism of all United States agents.[45]

President Wilson should have recognized that there were policy problems in Siberia. He received numerous complaints about General Graves from the Allies and US diplomats.[46] Although the President supported General Graves it appears that General Graves and the Secretary of War were the only people who knew it. To his credit General Graves remained true to his interpretation of US policy. As a result US forces in Siberia spent most of their time guarding stockpiled war supplies and the Trans-Siberian Railroad. They did not become enmeshed in the Russian Civil War. Unlike their comrades in North Russia they spent very little time fighting Bolsheviks. Left to the Allies or the State Department the outcome could have been more disastrous.

THE ARMISTICE

On 11 November 1918 World War I ended and the Allies stopped fighting the Germans. They did not stop fighting Russians. Although the aide-memoire stated that the primary purpose of the

US was to win the War, the Armistice did not end the intervention into Russia. The fact that President Wilson did not withdraw US troops after the Armistice further confirms his confusion over US policy in Russia.

The Armistice produced clear circumstances which required a review of objectives. As Clausewitz says,

> ... the original political objectives can greatly alter during the course of the war and may finally change entirely since they are influenced by events and their probable consequences.[47]

Although courses of action and policy toward Russia were discussed at the Paris Peace Conference objectives were not addressed. The President never reviewed his objectives or made any new ones, and US policy towards Russia was never formally revised. As a consequence US soldiers remained in Russia and military leaders and diplomats carried out their programs as if nothing had changed.

Different reasons have been given for Wilson's failure to seize the moment and leave Russia. These reasons are linked to why he chose to get involved in the first place and include: preventing Japanese domination of Siberia, wanting to be a good ally, and defeating Bolshevism. The last of these was more prominent after the Armistice, than it had been earlier in 1918, because the only fighting remaining was in the Russian Civil War. Consequently the threat of Bolshevism weighed heavily on the President's mind as he saw a government evolving in Russia which was contrary to his vision. Although all the reasons mentioned

above contributed to the President's indecision during World War I, peace and the new world he envisioned dominated his thinking after the Armistice.

Wilson was so consumed by his idea of a League of Nations that he personally conducted negotiations for the US in Paris, and in order to gain consensus with the British and French he acquiesced to their anti-Bolshevik sentiment. At a time when a major change in events called for a review of objectives the President failed to see the futility of remaining in Russia and merely left things as they were.

CONCLUSION

Soon after he arrived in Siberia General Graves found that American soldiers were confused as to why they were there.[48] Some soldiers believed they were there to assist the Czechoslovaks who were fighting their way towards Vladivostok, and others thought they were there to capture German POWs who were armed and running loose in Siberia. Some believed they were there to reestablish the Eastern Front against Germany, and finally there were those who thought they had come to fight the Bolsheviks. A similar situation existed in North Russia. Unfortunately this problem of understanding the mission was
indicative of confusion among US leaders at all levels of government.

The situation in Russia in 1918 is understandable because it was born of confusion. The President lacked good information when

he made his decision to intervene. The combination of desperate Allies and US diplomats who were anti-Bolshevik built a false case for intervention. Over the protests of his military advisers the President reluctantly decided to allow US participation in an intervention. His confusion was further displayed in an aide-memoire that left room for wide interpretation due to its ambiguity. Execution of the President's policy was therefore doomed to failure and, except in the case of General Graves, execution was not consistent with policy.

The signing of the Armistice ended the war on the Western Front, but it did not end the intervention into Russia. The Armistice accomplished the primary objective of US policy as stated in the aide-memoire, which was to win the war against Germany. At that point the Secretary of War recommended that the US withdraw, but the Secretary of State recommended that the US stay.[49] Confusion over policy and objectives persisted throughout the intervention. A review and restatement of policy would have been appropriate at that time. That did not occur and consequently the sum of US action in Russia contributed to the "sad confusion in Russia" which the President wanted to avoid.[50]

RECOMMENDATIONS

There are lessons that strategic leaders can learn from the US intervention into Russia. The first of these is that decisions must be based on good information, or the best information available. Even with the communications technology we have today

this can be difficult. It is still necessary to search out or cause subordinates to search out the correct information. In addition there is nothing comparable to getting information first hand. A commander visiting the front to get the real picture, instead of relying on reports which can present a distorted picture, will be better prepared to make decisions. The fog of war is real at every level. In the six months it took President Wilson to make his decision to intervene, he relied purely on information from US representatives in Russia and on the Supreme War Council. Wilson should have sent a trusted subordinate to Russia to see first hand what the situation really was.

The second lesson is that policy and objectives must be clear and understood by everyone involved in the execution of that policy. A clear statement of policy will assist in better understanding and is the important first step. The leader's intent--in this case, the President's-- should have been fully expressed so that subordinates could act in varying situations and remain consistent with the policy.

A clear policy understood by all the players should then lead to its correct execution. This points to the third lesson, which is that Wilson's policy should have been executed consistently; and, if not, corrective action should have been taken immediately. Achieving objectives in the complex global environment of today will be extremely difficult. Strategic leaders at odds with each other do not contribute to smooth relations and can be counter-productive in reaching objectives.

In terms of the Russian intervention the War and State Departments should have been operating in unison. When they got out of line the President should have disciplined the right people.

Finally, when conditions changed, the President's policy should have been reviewed. A major event, such as the Armistice, which produced new circumstances cannot be ignored; especially when the result was the accomplishment of an original policy objective. A lack of acknowledgement of such a change caused misunderstanding among the parties involved and led to a loss of focus by the policy executors. In this case new objectives and policy should have been stated, or diplomatic and military actions should have been terminated if the original mission had been accomplished.

The lessons from the Russian intervention have been reinforced by US national leaders since 1918. President Truman relieved General MacArthur as the result of a policy dispute during the Korean War. President Johnson, on the other hand, combined unclear objectives with inconsistent policy during the Vietnam War. These are just two examples, but they indicate the importance of lessons that can be learned from the Russian intervention.

Most importantly the lessons of the intervention into Russia must be used in the future. Unlike 1918 we are not currently engaged in a world war but there remains the possibility for conflict within the CIS as it evolves from the remains of the

Soviet Union. Prior to US involvement at any level in that country we should carefully consider the examples of the past to assist our future decision making.

APPENDIX 1

CHRONOLOGY

Mar 1917	Czar abdicates, Kerensky government comes to power
May 1917	Wilson sends Railway Commission to Russia
Oct 1917	Bolshevik Revolution, Kerensky government falls
Dec 1917	Soviet-German armistice
Jan 1918	Wilson announces his Fourteen Points for peace
Mar 1918	Treaty of Brest-Litovsk
	Ludendorf Offensive on western front
Apr 1918	Japanese troops arrive in Vladivostok
	British and French troops arrive in Murmansk
May 1918	USS Olympia arrives in Murmansk Harbor
	Beginning of the Czech uprising
Jul 1918	Czar and family executed by Bolsheviks
	President Wilson writes Aide-Memoire
Aug 1918	US Intervention announced
	US troops arrive in Siberia
Sep 1918	US troops arrive in North Russia
Nov 1918	Armistice signed, World War I ends
Jan 1919	Peace conference opens in Paris
Mar 1919	Allies sign Railway Agreement
Jun 1919	US troops leave North Russia
	Treaty of Versailles
Apr 1920	US troops leave Siberia

APPENDIX 2

The Secretary of State to the Allied Ambassadors Aide-Memoire

The whole heart of the people of the United States is in the winning of this war. The controlling purpose of the Government of the United States is to do everything that is necessary and effective to win it. It wishes to cooperate in every practicable way with the Allied Governments, and to cooperate ungrudgingly; for it has no ends of its own to serve and believes that the war can be won only by common counsel and intimate concert of action. It has sought to study every proposed policy or action in which its cooperation has been asked in this spirit, and states the following conclusions in the confidence that, if it finds itself obliged to decline participation in any undertaking or course of action, it will be understood that it does so only because it deems itself precluded from participating by imperative considerations either of policy or of fact.

In full agreement with the Allied Governments and upon the unanimous advice of the Supreme War Council, the Government of the United States adopted, upon its entrance into the war, a plan for taking part in the fighting on the western front into which all its resources of men and material were to be put, and put as rapidly as possible, and it has carried out that plan with energy and success, pressing its execution more and more rapidly forward and literally putting into it the entire energy and executive force of the nation. This was its response, its very willing and hearty response, to what was the unhesitating judgment alike of its own military advisers and of the advisers of the Allied Governments. It is now considering, at the suggestion of the Supreme War Council, the possibility of making very considerable additions even to this immense program which, if they should prove feasible at all, will tax the industrial processes of the United States and the shipping facilities of the whole group of associated nations to the utmost. It has thus concentrated all its plans and all its resources upon this single absolutely necessary object.

In such circumstances it feels it to be its duty to say that it cannot, so long as the military situation on the western front remains critical, consent to break or slacken the force of its present effort by diverting any part of its military force to other points or objectives. The United States is at a great distance from the field of action on the western front; it is at a much greater distance from any other field of action. The instrumentalities by which it is to handle its armies and its stores have at great cost and with great difficulty been created in France. They do not exist elsewhere. It is practicable for her to do a great deal in France; it is not practicable for her to do anything of importance or on a large scale upon any other field. The American Government, therefore, very respectfully requests its associates to accept its deliberate judgment that it should not dissipate its force by attempting important operations

elsewhere.

It regards the Italian front as closely coordinated with the western front, however, and is willing to divert a portion of its military forces from France to Italy if it is the judgment and wish of the Supreme Command that it should do so. It wishes to defer to the decision of the Commander in Chief in this matter, as it would wish to defer in all others, particularly because it considers these two fronts so closely related as to be practically but separate parts of a single line and because it would be necessary that any American troops sent to Italy should be subtracted from the number used in France and be actually transported across French territory from the ports now used by the Armies of the United States.

It is the clear and fixed judgment of the Government of the United States, arrived at after repeated and very searching reconsiderations of the whole situation in Russia, that military intervention there would add to the present sad confusion in Russia rather than cure it, injure her rather than help her, and that it would be of no advantage in the prosecution of our main design, to win the war against Germany. It can not , therefore, take part in such intervention or sanction it in principle. Military intervention would, in its judgment, even supposing it to be efficacious in its immediate avowed object of delivering an attack upon Germany from the east, be merely a method of making use of Russia, not a method of serving her. Her people could not profit by it, if they profited by it at all, in time to save them from their present distresses, and their substance would be used to maintain foreign armies, not to reconstitute their own. Military action is admissible in Russia, as the Government of the United States sees the circumstances, only to help the Czecho-Slovaks consolidate their forces and get into successful cooperation with their Slavik kinsman and to steady any efforts at self-government or self-defense in which the Russians themselves may be willing to accept assistance. Whether from Vladivostok or from Murmansk and Archangel, the only legitimate object for which American or Allied troops can be employed, it submits, is to guard military stores which may subsequently be needed by Russian forces and to render such aid as may be acceptable to the Russians in the organization of their own self-defense. For helping the Czecho-Slovaks there is immediate necessity and sufficient justification. Recent developments have made it evident that that is in the interest of what the Russian people themselves desire, and the Government of the United States is glad to contribute the small force at its disposal for that purpose. It yields, also, to the judgment of the Supreme Command in the matter of establishing a small force at Murmansk, to guard the military stores at Kola, and to make it safe for Russian forces to come together in organized bodies in the north. But it owes it to frank counsel to say that it can go no further than these modest and experimental plans. It is not in a position, and has no expectation of being in a position, to take part in organized intervention in adequate force from either Vladivostok or Murmansk and Archangel. It feels that it ought to add, also,

that it will feel at liberty to use the few troops it can spare only for the purposes here stated and shall feel obliged to withdraw those forces, in order to add them to the forces at the western front, if the plans in whose execution it is now intended that they should cooperate should develop into others inconsistent with the policy to which the Government of the United States feels constrained to restrict itself.

At the same time the Government of the United States wishes to say with the utmost cordiality and good will that none of the conclusions here stated is meant to wear the least color of criticism of what the other governments associated against Germany may think it wise to undertake. It wishes in no way to embarrass their choice of policy. All that is intended here is a perfectly frank and definite statement of the policy which the United States feels obliged to adopt for herself and in the use of her own military forces. The Government of the United States does not wish it to be understood that in so restricting its own activities it is seeking, even by implication, to set limits to the action or to define the policies of its associates.

It hopes to carry out the plans for the safeguarding of the rear of the Czecho-Slovaks operating from Vladivostok in a way that will place it and keep it in close cooperation with a small military force like its own from Japan, and if necessary from the other Allies, and that will assure it of the cordial accord of the Allied powers; and it proposes to ask all associated in this course of action to unite in assuring the people of Russia in the most public and solemn manner that none of the governments uniting in action either in Siberia or in northern Russia contemplates any interference of any kind with the political sovereignty of Russia, any intervention in her internal affairs, or any impairment of her territorial integrity either now or hereafter, but that each of the associated powers has the single object of affording such aid as shall be acceptable, and only such aid as shall be acceptable, to the Russian people in their endeavor to regain control of their own affairs, their own territory, and their own destiny.

It is the hope and purpose of the Government of the United States to take advantage of the earliest opportunity to send to Siberia a commission of merchants, agricultural experts, labor advisers, Red Cross representatives, and agents of the Young Men's Christian Association accustomed to organizing the best methods of spreading useful information and rendering educational support of a modest sort, in order in some systematic manner to relieve the immediate economic necessities of the people there in every way for which opportunity may open. The execution of this plan will follow and will not be permitted to embarrass the military assistance rendered in the rear of the westward-moving forces of the Czecho-Slovaks.

Washington, July 17, 1918.

ENDNOTES

1.Richard Goldhurst, The Midnight War (New York, NY: McGraw-Hill, 1978), 3.

2.Ibid., 9.

3.Betty Miller Unterberger, America's Siberian Expedition, 1918-1920 (New York, NY: Greenwood Press, 1956), 29.

4.Ibid., 31.

5.Ibid., 32-33.

6.James William Morley, The Japanese Thrust into Siberia, 1918 (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1957), 4.

7.Ibid., 36.

8.Ibid., 38.

9.Ibid.

10.Goldhurst, 89.

11.John Silverlight, The Victor's Dilemma (New York, NY: Weybright and Talley, 1970), 27.

12.Unterberger, 45-46.

13.Ibid., 46-47.

14.Ibid., 46.

15.William S. Graves, America's Siberian Adventure (New York, NY: Peter Smith, 1941), 26.

16.Virginia Cooper Westall, "AEF Siberia," Military Review 48 (March 1968): 13.

17.Ibid., 38.

18.Unterberger, 60.

19.Silverlight, 38.

20.Westall, 13.

21.Unterberger, 67.

22.Morley, 262.

23.Goldhurst, 14.

24.Graves, 7.

25.Ibid., 8-9.

26.George F. Kennan, The Decision to Intervene (New York, NY: Atheneum, 1958), 418.

27.Clarence A. Manning, The Siberian Fiasco (New York, NY: Library Publishers, 1952), 80.

28.Graves, 7-8.

29.Ibid., 9.

30.E. M. Halliday, The Ignorant Armies (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1958), 28.

31.Benjamin D. Rhodes, The Anglo-American Winter War with Russia, 1918-1919 (New York, NY: Greenwood Press, 1988), 20.

32.Kennan, 420.

33.Ibid., 425.

34.Halliday, 43.

35.Halliday, 43.

36.Goldhurst, 115.

37.Halliday, 20,24.

38.Silverlight, 77.

39.John Albert White, The Siberian Intervention (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1950), 232.

40.Ibid., 231.

41.Graves, 57-58.

42.White, 272.

43.Unterberger, 99.

44.Manning, 134.

45.Graves, 192-3.

46.White, 272.

47.Carl Von Clausewitz, On War ed. and trans. Michael

Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), 92.

48.Unterberger, 90.

49.Unterberger, 104.

50.Graves, 7.

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